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BLOCK ON BENEFITS

A QUARTER of all the people in Cherwell on incapacity benefit have been told they are “fit for work” under controversial reforms.

Official figures show about 270 out of the 970 claimants have had their benefit stopped between October 2010 and August last year.

A further 310 were told they will continue to receive the full benefit, now renamed employment and support allowance.

But the remaining 390 were placed in a “work-related activity group” to get help to prepare them for employment. Those who refuse face

By Oliver Evans

losing their benefits. The reforms are part of Government attempts to get people off benefits and back into work.

But there have been concerns about the quality of assessments, contracted to outsourcing firm Atos.

All complete a questionnaire and some then attend an assessment to look at issues like their ability to walk, sit, see, hear and examine their mental health.

Barbara Shaw, manager of Banbury Citizens Advice Bureau, said: “A lot of clients are coming forward to complain that they don’t feel they have been assessed fairly.

“The high numbers of cases that are overturned at the appeal stage suggests that there are some fundamental flaws in the initial assessment.”

She said the service had seen more than 500 people with queries about employment and support allowance in the last year.

The Government could not supply Cherwell appeal figures but said about 15 per cent were overturned nationally, often on new evidence.

Sean Woodcock, leader of the Labour group on Cherwell District Council, said: “We want to make sure that support is geared towards those it should go to.

“There is a feeling from a number of people that the bar is being set too high and a number of people are being wrongly classed as fit for work.”

Mental health charity Mind has warned “the system is not sophisticated enough to understand the impact that mental health problems have on people and their ability to work”.

Nationally a similar proportion were placed into the three groups, with 29 per cent classed as fit for work.

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesman said: “The old incapacity benefits system condemned too many people to a life on benefits, with little hope of moving back to work. Now people who can work will be given help to find a job, while those who need unconditional support will get it.”

● Have you been affected by the reforms? Tell us your story at banbury@nqo.com or call 01865 425271.

Worry over looming water bills

WATER bills could rise to £440 a year for North Oxfordshire residents within the next seven years.

Thames Water has announced plans to increase bills by an average of £100 to pay for infrastructure improvements.

Britain’s largest water company, which has the worst leakage record in the UK, plans a series of above-inflation increases for the next five years.

If Ofwat gives the green light, bills will

increase one per cent above inflation for five years from 2015. Once inflation is added, the bill could rise even higher.

Thames Water said it would invest £4.9bn in improving its service by 2015.

It hopes to install 370,000 new water meters, and to spend £250m protecting 2,500 homes from sewer flooding.

Thames Water reported a pre-tax profit of £112.6m for the six months up to October 2012.



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Printed and published by Newsquest Oxfordshire, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EJ, Tel: 01865 425362. Newspaper Sales Department 01865 425282. Direct Delivery 0800 028 4592.

InBRIEF

Debate over 'eyesore' bid

Views are being sought on a council bid to force the sale of an "eyesore" former hotel and offices in Banbury for housing.

Cherwell District Council has requested a compulsory purchase order for the empty Crown House, in Christchurch Walk.

It wants to transform the building – vacant for more than 20 years – into 40 flats with shopping space. The Government has the final say.

A public inquiry will be held on September 3 and 4 at the council's White Post Lane, Bodicote HQ, which the public can attend.

Views can be given to Environment Appeals, Administration Room, 3/25 Hawk Wing, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6PN, quoting NPCU/CPO/C3105/71757.

Feedback can also be given at consult.cherwell.gov.uk/portal/phe/re/ch

Sentencing date

A man has been convicted of sexual assault after a 20-year-old woman was attacked.

Arelas Aputis, 23, of Southam Road, Banbury, was convicted by magistrates in the town.

The incident took place in Kings Road, Banbury, on April 23.

Aputis has been bailed to appear at Banbury Magistrates' Court on Monday for sentencing.

Two teenage boys released on bail after burglaries

TWO teenage boys have been arrested in connection with a series of burglaries in Hook Norton.

Police are trying to trace the owner of a bicycle, allegedly stolen in one of the burglaries.

A 15-year-old and a 13-year-old have both been arrested. The bicycle, a black Giant Boulder Aluxx 6000, was stolen from a property in the

Hollybush area of Hook Norton at about 5am on Thursday, May 16.

The owner is urged to call police on 101.

A 15-year-old boy from Hook Norton has been arrested on suspicion of five non-dwelling burglaries and the theft of a bicycle, all in Hook Norton.

Three of the burglaries took place on May 16,

with the remaining two happening on May 11, while the theft is alleged to have taken place on May 12.

In connection with the case, a 13-year-old boy from Banbury has also been arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods.

The two boys have been released on bail until June 26.

■ Trader says: 'If other councils can do it, they can do it'

Call for free parking – despite revenue slump

By Oliver Evans

PROFITS at council car parks in Banbury slumped by £120,000 last year, official figures show.

Cherwell District Council got £879,864 in the 12 months from April 2012 compared to £1,004,590 in the previous year.

It offered free parking for most of December in a bid to help recession-hit traders.

During this month takings were £34,882, compared to £91,082 in December 2011 and £57,714 in December 2010.

But the total proceeds were still higher than 2010/11, when £824,287 was collected.

Some traders have called for free parking, as provided by councils in West and South Oxfordshire.

Yet deputy council leader George Reynolds said: "If I could find half a million from somewhere, I would seriously look at free parking for an hour."

"We have been discussing it and we continue to discuss how we can help the traders in the town."

However, he said car parks were not used "a lot more than in a normal Christmas" during the free period.

About a third of the

town's car parks are run by the council and include Spiceball North, Bridge Street and Horse Fair.

He said: "Our parking held up in line with national trends." The High Street is "not too bad at all" for business, he said.

Yet Malcolm Douglas, who runs Henry's in High Street, and has long called for free parking, hit back.

He said: "I don't care where they get the money from. The finances mean nothing to me. If other councils can do it, they can do it."

"The car parks are not always full. But they used to be always full."

The council had a district-wide target for the 12 months from last April of £1,512,811 but brought in £1,539,660.



Deputy council leader George Reynolds

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Confusion over NHS meeting

IN last week's edition of the *Banbury Cake*, it was reported the Keep The Horton group would be meeting managers of the Oxford University Hospital Trust about the future of services at the hospital.

That meeting took place on Monday and was a closed one and not open to the public, contrary to what was reported.

However, details will be reported to the next meeting of the NHS Community Partnership Network meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, June 11, at 10am.

That meeting, in Room 163 at Cherwell District Council offices in Bodicote House, Bodicote, is open to the public.

We apologise for the confusion.

Teens held after police car chase

THREE youths have been released on bail, in connection with a car chase through Banbury and several villages.

A silver BMW 3 series was chased after it failed to stop for the police in Banbury town centre on Monday of last week at around 1.15am.

It was chased by police vehicles and the force helicopter until it was stopped in King's Sutton.

Investigating officer PC Reece Millar said: "During the pursuit a member of the public moved out of the way of the BMW in Astrop Road, King's Sutton. We would very much like to speak to them."

Three youths, aged 17, 16 and 15, were arrested and released on bail, one to June 14 and the others to June 30.

Anyone with any information can contact the police on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Get-tough stance over road grit pleas

MOST requests for streetside grit bins do not meet new eligibility criteria, Banbury Town Council has said.

It said just 30 of the 74 requests for bins met the criteria it had drawn up to prioritise demand.

Streets will get bins depending on issues like the steepness of the road, traffic and accident record.

The five highest scorers are in the Hardwick estate – Conifer Rise and Harlequin Way, Grosvenor Road, Calthorpe and Chetwode and Harlech Close in Ruscombe.

Other high scorers include Wesley Drive, Easington; Prospect Road, Grimsbury; Devon Way and Hereford Way in Hardwick and Foscote Rise in Calthorpe.

A council report said of the new system: "There is a budget pressure in responding to the requests for additional grit bins, which unless properly managed and prioritised, will lead to uncontrolled expenditure."

Oxfordshire County Council, the final say authority, will have the final say on any new bins.

The town council keeps the bins topped up over the winter after they are initially filled up by the county council at the start of the season in October.

It has also launched a "snow warden" scheme to seek volunteers to control the supply of grit.

This followed concerns that people were taking salt to use on their drives, a criminal offence as salt is only for the public highway.

Thefts have pushed the council's salt budget from £3,000 in 2011/12 to £10,000 and then £30,000 in the last financial year, 2012/13.

For information call the town council on 01295 250340.

■ Court is told that child 'fell off kitchen counter'

Father jailed over death of toddler

A FATHER, whose 22-month-old son died after falling off a kitchen counter, has been jailed for child cruelty.

Taylor Mason died in the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford on November 12, 2010, a week after suffering an injury to his skull.

On Thursday of last week, a judge at Oxford Crown Court heard how his father, Craig Mason, of High Street, Middleton Cheney, did not initially mention his son's accident to doctors.

The 33-year-old has now been jailed for 15 months after he admitted wilfully assaulting, ill-treating, neglecting, or

By Banbury reporter

abandoning a child.

Paul Dunkels, prosecuting, said on December 4, Mason's wife, Clara, had gone out during the evening, leaving her husband to look after their son.

He told Judge Ian Pringle that Mason's explanation, when he finally gave it to officers, was that Taylor had fallen off a kitchen counter at around 5pm when he briefly turned his back.

Mr Dunkels said it was not until around 3am that Mrs Mason realised something

was wrong when she heard Taylor crying and found him fitting in his cot.

He said the lack of an explanation for his injury led to a potentially fatal delay in providing the necessary treatment.

He said: "It is possible, but not certain, that earlier ventilation would have prevented his death."

But he added that Taylor's death was partly caused by a pre-existing fissure in his skull which had been further damaged by his fall and had been there since birth.

Sally O'Neill QC, defending, said: "Taylor's death was an absolute tragedy to all concerned."

Hobby horses set to ride back into town



FLASHBACK: to the Banbury Hobby Horse Festival that was staged last July

THE Town Mayor's Sunday and Hobby Horse Festival will take place this year on Sunday, July 7, it has been announced.

The toy-themed event will be held in People's Park from 1pm to 4pm and feature a children's sport day.

It will be preceded by a civic procession from the Town Hall, in Bridge Street, at 12.15pm to St Mary's Church for a 12.30pm service.

InBRIEF

Special beer for festival

■ Brewery Hook Norton will launch a new ale as part of its sponsorship for the tenth Cornbury Festival. The ale, called *Glorious 10th*, will be available at all the on-site bars at the festival, which will take place in Great Tew on July 5 to 7.

Hook Norton will also host "meet the brewer" sessions at the festival and its shire horses will be on hand too. The festival will feature headline acts Keane, Van Morrison and The Proclaimers.

Boost for club

■ Banbury Bulldogs Skater Hockey Club has been given a £480 boost, thanks to the Co-operative. South Midlands members gave cash for street hockey sessions from the Co-operative's Community Fund.

The club's Carolyn Capel said: "We are delighted as funding is becoming ever harder to secure."

Free wi-fi

■ Banbury's train station has now been equipped with free wi-fi. Access will be free for up to an hour through IT firm The Cloud and then £2 for the rest of the day.

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Call for organisations to join volunteer charter

ORGANISATIONS in Oxfordshire are being urged to sign up to a new volunteers' charter.

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action wants groups using volunteers to join the Oxfordshire Valuing Volunteers Charter.

The call comes during Volunteers Week, which began on Saturday,

which aims to celebrate people who offer their time or skills free.

Lindsay Watts, from OCVA's Volunteer Centre Oxfordshire, said: "Around a third of adults in Oxfordshire volunteers regularly and many more carry out at least one volunteering activity during the course of the year.

"It is important for volunteers to feel supported and valued in their roles and that organisations are given support and resources to effectively manage their volunteers.

"We are asking organisations to sign up to these Charter standards."

The principles in the charter include that all volunteering is undertaken by

choice, volunteers should receive reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, they should have access to training and they should be able to work in safe and healthy environments.

Organisations can sign up at ocva.org.uk/Volunteers-Charter. People can call Volunteer Centre Oxfordshire on 01865 251946.

■ Trial continues over alleged bid to defraud firm's shareholders

Accountant is quizzed on 'sham' agreement

AN ACCOUNTANT on trial for fraud has been asked by a judge if he saw anything "dodgy" in what his company was doing.

Mark Woodbridge, 42, is accused of conspiracy to defraud the shareholders of Torex Retail, which had an office in Banbury, along with Nigel Horn, 58.

The company's former chairman Christopher Loosemore and chief executive Christopher Moore both admitted two charges of conspiracy to defraud in January.

At Oxford Crown Court last week, Woodbridge told Judge Mary Jane Mowat that a distribution agreement, described by the prosecution as a

By Banbury reporter

sham, had made "sense" to him at the time.

Judge Mowat said: "Do you now accept the Magdalen agreement was cooked up to cover up money going into the book?"

Woodbridge answered: "I didn't think it was, because it was always spoken about before.

"All I can think is that they [Moore and Loosemore] never had any intention for that contract to run its course.

"When I look back at April, May and

June 2006, it was always seen as a contingency to the big global deal [with McDonald's] and that is what everyone saw it as."

Woodbridge, of Mill Farm, Brookhampton, Kington, Warwickshire, denies three charges of false accounting in 2006, between May 1 and August 15, and two charges of conspiracy to defraud between May 1, 2006, and January 26, 2007.

Nigel Horn, of The Avenue, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, who was the firm's legal director, also denies conspiracy to defraud between November 1, 2006, and January 26, 2007. The trial continues.



Mark Woodbridge arriving at court

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£700,00 boost to help expanding school

A BANBURY primary school has been granted nearly £700,000 to build six new classrooms at the school.

Dashwood Banbury Academy was given £686,900 funding from the Government via the Academies Capital Maintenance

Fund for the development.

An extra class for reception pupils will be ready by this September, with the rest of the classrooms due to be completed for September 2014.

Dr Fiona Hammans, executive principal for the Aspirations

Academies District, which includes the school, said: "We're thrilled this funding has been made available as we've been in the dreadful position of having to refuse admission to parents and children who so want to attend the academy.

"This means the excellent quality of education can be made available to many more pupils."

The school, in Merton Street, takes up to 30 pupils per year.



Dr Fiona Hammans

Bid to have a planning say

FOUR villages are to take the first step towards taking on new planning powers.

Cherwell District Council is to recognise Adderbury, Bloxham, Hook Norton and Stratton Audley as neighbourhood areas.

This is the first step towards villagers preparing a neighbourhood development

plan. The plans – which must be supported by a referendum – set out what development residents will accept. They must be considered by Cherwell District Council when it makes decisions on planning applications. The council's executive is set to approve the neighbourhood areas on Monday.

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Launch of body to guard patients

By Tom Jannings

A NEW health and social care watchdog has been urged to "keep it simple" and to involve minority groups and children.

Healthwatch will become the statutory link between patients and health and social care bosses, and will also have the power to hold bodies to account.

About 150 people recently attended a launch event to discuss ideas to improve the new organisation.

The Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council, which won the contract to run Healthwatch, was told to improve communication.

Delays in the tendering process have meant Healthwatch was still not fully staffed, and an election to create its board would not take place until July.

One of those at the meeting, Judith Wardle, said: "I think it is going to be difficult because they have come into it so late, compared to other areas of the country. But there is a lot of enthusiasm and I think it can work."

"The priority for Healthwatch is



LEFT: Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council chief executive Linda Watson

BELOW: Dr Jonathan McWilliam speaks at the launch of Healthwatch Oxfordshire



communication, to make sure that everyone knows about it."

Ann Tomline said: "It was disappointing that no one was there to represent ethnic communities or young people. We need to be more inclusive."

Others at the meeting said that Healthwatch should not duplicate the structures that already exist, with one saying: "We should not try to reinvent the wheel."

Dr Stephen Richards is the chief

executive officer of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, which took over purchasing health services on April 1.

He said: "Whatever comes up through Healthwatch and the public involvement network, let's make it really simple."

Oxfordshire County Council's director for social and community services, John Jackson, said the challenge was for Healthwatch to become the public's voice.

He said: "The reality is that good quality, efficient and effective social care can only happen if we work with the people who are most directly impacted."

ORCC chief executive Linda Watson felt there was no point in Healthwatch trying to set up another layer of complexity.

She said: "Communication is the key."

Healthwatch, which takes over from predecessor Oxfordshire LINK, will have powers to demand answers from health and social care providers.

Elections will take place for the board - which will set Healthwatch's policy - in July.

Watchdog director named

ROS Pearce has been named as Healthwatch's new director and will formally join the team in about a month's time.

She will leave her post as transformation manager at the Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service.

Ms Pearce has previously worked in strategy at Leicestershire County Council and was director of ACE Children's Centre in Chipping Norton.

She said: "I am excited and looking forward to it. Healthwatch is the consumer's champion. We will be the voice of consumers."

"For us to do that effectively, we need to listen to what people are saying and effectively communicate that to the commissioners."

She said the next months would be about building relationships, both with existing patients' forums and the health and social care commissioners and providers.

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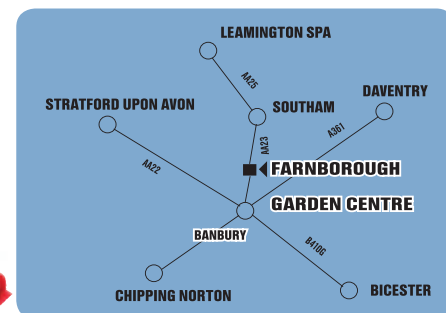
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InBRIEF

Six held after street brawl

SIX people have been bailed after a brawl in the car park of TK Maxx, Banbury. Thames Valley Police have just revealed that they were called to the Calthorpe Street shop on Wednesday, May 22.

A force spokesman said: "People reported seeing a fight between two groups of Asian men, while a large group of the men watched. A number of the offenders fled the scene in vehicles, including a silver BMW 320 coupe, a red Lexus GS300 and a red SEAT Leon."

The force said the Lexus failed to stop for police and its occupants got out in Gillett Road and ran into Park Road.

A 26-, 21- and 23-year-old man were arrested on suspicion of affray and bailed to July 9.

Three boys were arrested for the same offence, a 15 and 17-year-old who was bailed to June 30 and a 16-year-old who was bailed to June 14.

Survey plea

Cherwell District Council is urging residents to take part in its annual satisfaction survey.

It asks 49 questions about issues like littering, waste and abandoned vehicles and should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete, the council said.

To complete the survey visit cherwell.gov.uk

Grants on offer

Community and voluntary groups are being encouraged to apply for a variety of grants.

Groups can apply through the Oxfordshire Community Foundation and applications for the next round need to be submitted by Friday, June 21.

For more information on the grants available, visit oxfordshire.org/cp6.php

Demolition sets dangerous precedent, says civic society chief

Probe as plan wins approval

THE demolition of part of a building in Banbury's old town has won official permission, despite an investigation into whether it was illegal.

Cherwell District Council has approved the partial demolition of 11 and 12 Church Lane, which connects Parsons Street and High Street.

It last month said it was "investigating a criminal offence" after large parts of the two-storey building, once Tiger Lilly, were removed.

But it has now approved a planning application for the works – for a three-storey building with a shop and five flats – that was submitted in March.

Spokesman Jemma Callow said "legal investigations are ongoing" and would not comment further.

Applicant New Recruits Professional Services has yet to comment.

Banbury Civic Society chairman Rob Kinchin-Smith said such works needed conservation area consent. The council would not comment.

Adding the demolition sets a "dangerous" precedent, he said: "It is a loss."

"The town is trying to market its old town. Church Lane is a key part of the old town and we can't countenance people just knocking buildings down without consent."

By Oliver Evans

He said the building formed part of a former Georgian theatre.

Council case officer Graham Wyatt said no objections were made to the plans, though "the building has been substantially demolished without consent".

But he said the third floor would be "barely noticeable", adding: "It is considered that the proposal does not detract from the conservation or appearance of the conservation area."

Kames Capital spokesman Adrian Cammidge said: "We believe the granting of planning permission for Banbury Gateway will be detrimental to the existing retail provision in Banbury Town Centre and to Banbury Cross Retail Park."

"There is currently an over supply of retail outlets in the town with several premises remaining un let and this development will exacerbate this problem."

"Our action is on behalf of our policyholders who are ordinary people investing in property to make provision for their retirement whose interest we have a duty to protect."



ABOVE: Pictured with the scaffolding of the site behind him is Rob Kinchin-Smith, acting chairman of Banbury Civic Society
LEFT: The building before demolition

Legal action is launched to halt new retail park

A COURT action, which has delayed a planned new retail park for Banbury, will be heard in November.

The owners of Castle Quay shopping centre and Banbury Cross Retail Park have launched a judicial review over the plans.

It is fighting Cherwell District Council's approval of a retail park, to include a Marks & Spencer and Next, at the Prodrive site. The motorsport company would first move to the site of the former Hella

lighting factory at the nearby Wildmere Industrial Estate.

The council declined to comment but Prodrive spokesman Ben Sayer said the challenge was over the process taken by the council.

He said: "We are pretty certain Cherwell District Council will win the judicial review, but it will add some delays and put uncertainty into the process."

Prodrive is now expected to move late rather than early next year, with

an opening in 2015.

The judicial review has been brought by Aegon and Scottish Widows Investment Partnership (SWIP), which owns Banbury Cross and Castle Quay.

A Scottish Widows spokesman said: "SWIP strongly believes that town centre remains at the heart of communities and is focused on protecting and maintaining its Castle Quay Shopping Centre in Banbury, to support local

businesses and attract visitors to the town." She would not comment further on the case behind the review. She said plans to extend Castle Quay for a hotel, cinema, shops, bars and restaurants "demonstrates SWIP's commitment to supporting the local economy in Banbury for the benefit of all".

Aegon was not available for comment. The case will be heard at the High Court on November 6 and 7.

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Are you Gymophobic?

According to the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) only 12% of the UK adult population use a gym! Despite the enormity of publicity used to persuading us to exercise more,

the fact remains that most of us don't like gyms. In other words, most people are Gymophobic!

What is it that makes someone Gymophobic? We asked 200 women what it is that they dislike about using a conventional gym. 73% said

that they found gyms intimidating. 69% said that they did not want to exercise alongside men and a further 39% said that they found most gyms to be full of young, slim, shapely girls who made them feel old and fat! 88% complained at lack of attention and advice" from Gym

Instructors and 55% said that gyms were too busy consuming. 61% said that gyms were expensive. 77% of women said that they did not feel fit enough to go to a gym and 49% said that they were too old!

Gymphobics

But things are very different at Gymphobics! Unlike conventional gyms, Gymphobics is not intimidating. There are no men on the all-ladies circuits and Gymphobics attracts thousands of women of all ages and all shapes and sizes. Members receive individual VIP attention from friendly, mature Instructors and the 30 minute workout means that almost everybody can find the time to attend. Unlike conventional gyms the Gymphobic programme is not demanding and requires no prior level of fitness. Even someone who has never exercised will find Gymphobics easy and fun.

Results are excellent! Most women lose a dress size in the first few weeks and go on to achieve a lovely figure. Gymphobics is fun and friendly which means that drop out rates are much lower than conventional gyms. People actually talk to each other at Gymphobics and there is a great social atmosphere which is enhanced by the varied social calendar, coffee mornings, charity occasions, etc. More than 70% of members renew their membership each year – more than twice the national average.



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To find out more call your nearest Gymphobics Centre.

It's hard to resist

Compared to weight training and hydraulic machines, 'air resistance' is much more user friendly.

Resistance exercise is the best way to tone up and burn fat, but not all resistance equipment is the same. There are various ways to perform resistance exercise. The commonest form is known as 'weight training' or 'Isotonic' exercise (ISO = same/tonic = tension).

It is fair to say that women think of weight training as a masculine activity. They associate weight training with body building, and assume that it will build muscles! For a female slimmer, that's the last thing that they want to do!

Weight training first became popular with bodybuilders and circus strongmen in the 1800's. Most conventional gyms still use this method which involves using free weights (barbells or dumbbells), or weight training machines. At Gymphobics we use our unique air resistance machines.

Another form of resistance training involves using 'hydraulic' machines and these are used in many ladies 'circuit gyms'. But hydraulic machines unnaturally 'work' the muscles in both directions making exercise much harder. In normal activity, we either push or pull, but with hydraulic machines you must do both!

Another negative feature with hydraulic machines is that they deliver 'accommodating' resistance. This means the harder one tries to work (by pushing or pulling with greater force), the more resistance is met! The downside of this is that when you use hydraulics, exercise never gets any easier!

Here at Gymphobics there are no weight training or hydraulic machines on our circuit. 'Air resistance' machines are a much more pleasant option for delivering resistance without the risk of building unwanted muscle. Exercising on our air machines is so easy it has been described as 'pushing or pulling against a cushion of air'.

Each air machine is designed to exercise a different body part. The machines are designed to tighten and tone the body but not to build muscles and are smooth and easy to use, and they also eliminate the danger of over training and muscle strain. Unlike hydraulic machines, air machines model normal activity. The muscle shortens and contracts (concentrically), then lengthens and relaxes (eccentrically) and the resistance level on each air machine can be pre set to reflect the member's capability.



Many women find gyms and health clubs intimidating, that is why Gymphobics has a totally new approach to figure shaping and weight loss and won't give you a phobia.

You will love the unique ladies only 30 minute workout which uses air driven equipment that is especially designed to make figure improvement fun and easier than you ever thought possible.



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- "I wish I had done this years ago! it has been really good for my asthma too! Everyone should do this!" **Sue - member 24642**
- "Achieved my goal. Able to get into the dress I got married in 10 years ago in time for our celebratory cruise. Tears of Joy!" **Wendy - member 12461**
- "Lost 33 inches. Feel like me again, wearing clothes not worn for 4 years. Thanks for all the support!" **Sally - member 12499**

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Critics concerned over 'secrecy' as hospital bosses receive up to £180,000



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Elaine Strachan-Hall,
chief nurse



Sue Donaldson,
director of
human resources



Andrew Stevens,
director of
planning and
information



Jan Fowler,
Nuffield
Orthopaedic
Centre chief
executive



Paul Brennan,
director of
clinical services

Rap over big NHS bonuses

HOSPITAL chiefs have been criticised for "hiding in secrecy" over why executives received bonuses of up to £180,000.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust said bonuses of up to £60,000 were paid to bosses who met "individual and corporate objectives".

But a spokesman said: "We are not able to go into specific details of why each board member received a bonus. These are confidential to the individuals concerned."

Nine bosses got a total £135,000 to £180,000 in bonuses for 2011/12 despite a two-year staff pay freeze and criticism of "bed blocking".

Exact bonuses figures are not available as the trust will only provide sums in bands of £5,000.

Chief executive Sir Jonathan Michael got £30,000 to £35,000, while medical director Prof Edward Baker got £55,000 to £60,000.

Oxfordshire MP Andrew Smith said: "The trust needs to make clear how and why these are justified, and what, if any, bonuses have been paid more recently."

Jacqueline Pearce-Gervis, of Oxfordshire-based campaign group Patient Voice, said: "I'm sure they deserved the bonuses but it is public money and the

By Oliver Evans and Sam McGregor

public should be told the reasons."

TaxPayers' Alliance spokesman Robert Oxley said: "Health bosses should be up-front about what they are paying staff instead of hiding it in secrecy."

"Otherwise taxpayers have no way of scrutinising how their money is spent and the danger is that any payment will appear unjustified."

The Royal College of Nursing said the bonuses were "very disheartening" to nurses, while The Royal College of Midwives branded them a "slap in the face" to staff.

The bonuses were awarded the same year Sir Jonathan outlined plans to cut the trust's budget by £49m.

This included £2.5m in job cuts, including compulsory redundancies, and £3.2m from changes to nursing spots on adult wards in 2012/13.

A trust spokesman said bonus decisions were made by a committee of its non-executive directors – Prof Sir John Bell, Alisdair Cameron, Christopher Goard, Geoffrey Salt, Anne Tutt and Peter Ward.

She said: "In response to the fact that directors achieved individual objectives, and delivered the majority of the corporate objectives for the financial year 2011/12, the committee awarded performance-related non-recurrent bonuses in line with contracts of employment."

While it met headline waiting time targets in 2011/12, the trust missed a target to cut down on bed blocking. The trust awarded no executive basic pay increases in 2012/13 or this year, 2013/14. It refused to give details of bonuses for 2012/13.

Banbury MP Sir Tony Baldry said: "Clearly any public body has got to justify the payments it makes to its staff."

"But trusts are multi-million pound businesses and the need to get the best possible people will inevitably affect wage levels".

Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust – from which two members got bonuses – merged with the hospital trust in November 2011. They are no longer on the trust board.

But two of the directors who got bonuses – Sir Jonathan and Andrew Stevens – took pay rises in the same year of up to £10,000 each.



Sir Jonathan Michael, Oxford
University Hospitals NHS Trust
chief executive



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The vanishing stories of war prisoners

By Mark Taylor

AN Oxfordshire soldier formed a band to keep up morale while locked up as a prisoner of the Nazis during the Second World War.

The story of Albert "Percy" Hickman, of Middleton Cheney, has come to light during a search for PoW artefacts.

However, wartime experts fear similar tales to that of the brave infantryman are drying up, as there may be no more prisoners of war left alive in Oxfordshire.

A £3m building in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, is currently under construction with a special area dedicated to PoWs.

It is scheduled to open next year and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum is seeking items related to captured soldiers.

Mr Hickman, who died in 1985 aged 80, fought with the Oxfordshire



Stuart Hickman, who is donating memorabilia to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum for their Prisoner of War exhibition OX58619

and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry before he was captured at Cassel in 1940, during the Dunkirk campaign.

He spent the next five years as a PoW in German-occupied Poland.

Mr Hickman, a talented clarinet and oboe player, started a band during his time in the camp to help keep spirits up.

His 64-year-old son, Stuart, recently visited the museum to hand over a ticket from a tram his father had boarded after escaping, his military dogtags, a diary and other items.

Stuart Hickman said: "I am hugely proud of him, given

what he went through.

"It's so important to us that his story and others are kept alive like this. If there are no more PoWs left in Oxfordshire it is even more vital that old artefacts can be found and contributed."

Museum bosses said the public response to their appeal had been "fantastic" but since the campaign launched in February no former prisoners of war had come forward.

Royal British Legion county chairman Jim Lewendon said he feared there were no more left in the county.

Mr Lewendon, 84, said: "I think it is so important that we

try to remember the soldiers who were captured and what they did for us.

"If we can persuade anyone to part with their artefacts and give them to the museum that would be wonderful too to ensure these stories are not lost."

Museum director Ursula Corcoran thanked the Hickman family for their generous donation and said the museum was keen to locate stories and items related to the German and Italian PoWs kept in Oxfordshire camps.

Anyone who can add to the project is asked to contact the museum on 01993 813832.

Second
World War
PoW
Albert
'Percy'
Hickman



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Newly-published book brings back the colour to fading rail images of the past



ABOVE: An ex-GWR Mogul steam locomotive hauls a goods train through Banbury station in 1960, just two years after the new building and platforms were opened

RIGHT: Former GWR Prairie tank locomotive No 6111 at Hook Norton station, hauling the Rail Enthusiasts' Club's Chiltern 200 railtour on September 14, 1963



Former GWR Prairie tank locomotive No 5152 leaves Chipping Norton with the branch goods train to Kingham in September, 1963



Death-throes of steam captured

By William Crossley

A NEW book brings a splash of colour to the dying days of steam trains on the railways of Oxfordshire and further afield.

The late Alan Maund, from Worcester, started using colour film in 1959 and travelled widely over the next few years, photographing steam locomotives as they were being phased out by British Railways and the diesel and electric trains that took their place.

After his death in 1983, aged 52, his archive was passed by his widow, Wendy, to photographer and film-maker Michael Clemens, who has now published a selection of the pictures, entitled *The Last Years of Steam Around the Midlands*.

The images were taken throughout the central counties of England, ranging from Oxfordshire in the south to Crewe in the north and from the Welsh border in the west to Huntingdon in the east.

Among the many Oxfordshire locations featured are Oxford station and the funeral train taking the body of Britain's Second World War Premier, Sir



Former GWR Prairie tank locomotive No 6111 on September 14, 1963, at the then Bicester London Road station (now Bicester Town)

Winston Churchill, to Hanborough station, on its way to Bladon for burial.

Kingham station, on the Cotswold Line, is shown in its final years as a key railway junction, with lines approaching from the four points of the compass, and Banbury's then new station puts in an appearance, with a steam-hauled goods train which could have come straight from Victorian times passing through.

A series of photographs taken of a railtour on a sunny September day in September

1963, which paused at Kingham, Hook Norton and Bicester London Road, gives no clue to the fate that awaited several of the Oxfordshire lines it ran along just a few months later, when Dr Beeching's axe fell and they were closed.

● *The Last Years of Steam Around the Midlands*, from the photographic archive of the late AJ Maund, by Michael Clemens, is published by Fonhill Media, priced £18.99. For details of Mr Clemens's other books and DVDs, see michaelclemensrailways.co.uk



Sir Winston Churchill's funeral train, hauled by Battle of Britain class locomotive No 34051 Sir Winston Churchill, passes slowly through Oxford station on January 30, 1965, carrying his body to Hanborough

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Tango with a twist is passionate tale

One of the world's major cultures is given a new perspective this weekend when Tango expert Patrissia Cuberos introduces a fascinating stage and screen history of this passionate dance.

"Tango: a History of Passion is a unique show," says Latin-American singer and dancer Ms Cuberos.

"It is not just live dancing and music. It is the history of Tango. And it has the unique mix of all performing arts – music, dancing, narrative and film."

This unusual performance show, presented in a cabaret setting at The Mill Theatre, Banbury, on Saturday, June 8, is not only entertaining but an education with a depth of feeling and expression rarely seen.

"The dance is not choreographed, as true Tango is a language that the dancers learn, speak and use to communicate with each other and the audience in a spontaneous, heart-felt way," says Ms Cuberos.

"Equally the musicians, although highly trained, only follow basic structures while melodies, feeling and expression happen 'in the moment'."

"The input the audience gives through their receptivity and appreciation, often changes the piece quite radically. No two performances are ever the same."

"This is risky and often disaster happens. But the payback is that when we are at one with our instruments, music and lyrics, the result is unique and truly moving."

Ms Cuberos and her company, Alma de Tango, have worked together on this project for three years and respond to each other with synchronicity of feeling and emotion.

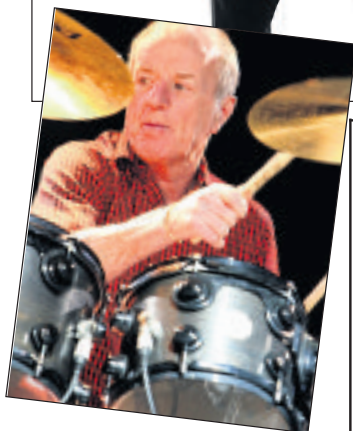
The 90-minute performance begins with a colourful, six-minute slide show embarking the audience on a cultural voyage to La Plata River and the origins of Tango.

Seamlessly the music and dance embroider themselves into the fabric of the show through narrative and images.

Alma de Tango's sensuous music and the seductive magic of the Tango dancers gliding on the stage immerse the audience in a musical and visual journey from the early days of Tango in Buenos Aires through its popularity in Europe, the golden years of the 1930s-1950s to the present day, where the energy and spirit of Tango lives on in a new generation of talented dancers and musicians.

The passionate voice of Patrissia Cuberos, accompanied by the fiery flamenco rhythms of Matthew Sullivan on the guitar, entwines itself with Liz Cowdrey's lyrical violin/viola melodies, while the energy of Matt Watson's bass keeps dancers and audiences on their toes.

■ **Tango: A History Of Passion is at The Mill Theatre on Saturday (June 8) at 7.30pm. Tickets £15 – call 01295 279002.**



■ **Also worth booking is a visit from iconic 1960s stars The Animals and Friends next Saturday (June 15) at The Mill, Banbury, 8.30pm. Tickets £15 – call 01295 279002.**



Patrissia Cuberos and Liz Cowdrey

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Find out if your antiques are really priceless

Simon Davies of Bonham's will be the expert valuer at an Antiques and Collectables evening next Thursday (June 13).

With refreshments, children's fun and prizes, the event at Middleton Cheney Library from 6.30-9.30pm promises to tell you once and for all whether those possessions are priceless.

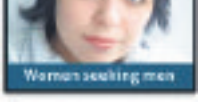
Bring your items – very carefully! – for a valuation. The charge for the first item is £2, with three items valued for £5, and if it would be difficult to

bring large items, a good photograph will do.

There will also be a treasure hunt, children's colouring games and a knowledge test with prizes donated by the following local businesses: Brackley Antiques Centre, The Fox at Farthinghoe; Londis in Banbury; Butlers Pantry; Brad's News Ltd; Mansion Hill Veterinary Practice; Limes Farm, Farthinghoe; Town & Country Cycles; Country Secrets and The Old Hall Bookshop in Brackley.



06/06/2013



WANT TO FALL IN LOVE Sweet Witney single mum, 42, non smoker, kind and caring nature, loves music, kind and caring nature, for friendship, lasting love. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143370 or send a text to 80360

SEE ME SMILE Happy, quiet, caring and reliable Oxford lady, 42, 5'2", simply searching for a tactile, fun and gentle-natured gent, for friendship, lasting happiness and love. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142441 or send a text to 80360

ENJOY AND SHARE LIFE Attractive, divorced Melksham lady, 45, 5'5", red hair, green eyes, grown up children, loves the outdoors, travel, animals and family life, seeking a genuine guy, 40-50, for true romance. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 138266 or send a text to 80360

QUALITY TIMES Sunny, loving, divorced Witney lady, 46, 5'5", average build, likes restaurants, walks, travelling, looking to have a fun and honest future together. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 138116 or send a text to 80360

TRY AND SEE Fun, blue-eyed, active and easygoing, enjoys swimming and keep fit, searching for a kind, caring and genuine guy, to share loving and fun. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 144409 or send a text to 80360

IT COULD BE Spiritual, genuine Didcot woman, 47, attractive, fun, have grown up children, likes clubs, cafes, music, films, walking and reading, seeking a caring and optimistic man, for friendship first. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 132828 or send a text to 80360

WITH OR WITHOUT Emotional, reliable and sensitive Witney girl, 46, 5'1", just looking to meet an independent, reflective gent, for fun and maybe a little romance. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140276 or send a text to 80360

TOP OF THE CLASS Enthusiastic, cultured and vibrant Melksham woman, 49, 5'5", looking for a fun, fun and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 138880 or send a text to 80360

SHARING THE GOOD TIMES Fun-loving, affectionate and interesting Witney female, 50, searching for a fair, upbeat man, for good times. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 1301568

I CAN MAKE YOU SMILE Sensitive, loving Abingdon female, 50, brunet and has a good sense of humour, enjoys dancing, music, current affairs, seeking a similar male, to enjoy life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 141137 or send a text to 80360

MAKE CONTACT Friendly, honest and reliable Oxford lady, 51, 5'1", wants to give an emotional, reliable guy, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143710 or send a text to 80360

DIVE INTO MY LIFE Active, fit Chipping Norton female, 51, good sense of humour, enjoys swimming, walking my dog, seeking a kind, genuine man, for a close relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 141137 or send a text to 80360

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LOVE TO HEAR FROM You Smart, intelligent Swindon lady, 62, N/S, likes country & riverside strolls, atmospheric country pubs, gardening, 60s-70s music, would like to meet a gent, 62-68, 5'10", N/S for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143526 or send a text to 80360

LET'S ENJOY LIFE Vibrant, sincere Witney female, 63, loves meeting people, good conversations, going out & about, walks, theatre, looking for a similar chap, for companionship and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142189

CHATS OVER A PINT? Country woman, looking to meet a loving, dark haired, slim man, I'm 64yrs old, 5'7", slim and fit, love being outdoors, walking and gardening. Marlborough/Wiltshire. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 112243 or send a text to 80360

LOVE IN TIME Nice, homely, retired and decent Swindon girl, 64, 5'1", brunet, non smoker, well-travelled, looking to find a cultured, caring guy, for friendship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140619 or send a text to 80360

LET'S MAKE HISTORY Loving Wiltshire female, 64, widow, non smoker, enjoys dining, reading and keeping fit, searching for a similar gent, for cosy times and companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140924 or send a text to 80360

HONEST RELATIONSHIP Non-smoking Bradford lady, 65, 5'5", slim-build, blue-eyes with a positive outlook, enjoy countryside, dancing, music, theatre, seeking a gent, 62-68, to enjoy similar interest. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 128454 or send a text to 80360

STILL OPTIMISTIC Open, warm-hearted Bicester female, 66, 5'5", likes reading, music and gardening, would like to meet a genuine, non-smoking male, with good sense of humour, to share happy times together. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143846 or send a text to 80360

HAPPIER DAYS Kind-hearted, homely and sensitive Didcot woman, 71, would like a date with a lovable, kind-hearted guy, for friendship and maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 136207 or send a text to 80360

HONEST COMPANY Tough kind, caring Oxford female, 78, likes country drive, pub lunches, fishing, seeking a tall man, with a good sense of humour, to share life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143588 or send a text to 80360

BLOSSOM WITH TLC Attractive Abingdon widow, 80, would like to meet a non-smoking, active gent, to enjoy days out and cosy times in with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 139676

Man seeking woman

Man seeking woman

Man seeking woman

Man seeking woman

FRIENDLY COMPANION Friendly Kidlington male, 34, 5'8", blue eyes, smoker, loves pubs meals and cosy times in, seeking a female, for love and romance. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143221 or send a text to 80360

TIME TO SHARE Lively Oxford male, 39, 5'10", med build, enjoys motorbikes, clubs, cinema, meals and more, searching for a loving woman, to share friendship and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 117999 or send a text to 80360

READY TO MEET MY SOULMATE Outgoing, sociable Oxford male, 41, black, GSOH, caring, enjoys living life to the full and would like to share it with a bubbly, attractive and kind female, for a loving relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 127095

PERFECT HARMONY Fun-loving, easygoing, tactile Witney biker, 41, 6ft, stocky build, shaven head and goatee, seeks fun loving, cheeky lady to share life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 108035

GOOD COMPANIONSHIP Confident, friendly Wantage male, 44, 6'4", green eyes, likes cooking, sports, cinema, looking to meet a black lady, 26-42, to enjoy good company and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140512 or send a text to 80360

ENERGIZER TIME Honest, friendly and charming Oxford male, 45, 6'3", stocky build, great sense of humour, enjoys sport, travel, cosy times and social drinks, seeking a fun-loving female, for happier times. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 101716 or send a text to 80360

COME CLOSER Active, kind-hearted and upbeat Oxford bloke, 46, 6'3", looking to find an insightful, liberal woman, for fun and maybe a little romance. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 130080

GOOD NATURED Upbeat Bicester male, 52, 5'10", brown hair, medium build, looking for an attractive, likeable lady, for friendship and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140492 or send a text to 80360

ETERNAL COMPANIONSHIP Outgoing, divorced Witney male, 52, pubs, meals, nice walks, family life, seeking an interesting woman, to get to know better. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 126741 or send a text to 80360

ALL TO LOVE Kind and caring Oxfordshire male, 53, brown hair, green eyes, GSOH, searching for a nice, genuine girl, for friendship first, then maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 461278

TAKE CHARGE Bright, humorous and optimistic Banbury man, 55, would like a date with a chatty, active woman, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 128386

SHARING GOOD TIMES Upbeat Burford widower, 58, own cars, works full time, likes days in and out, countryside walks, driving, looking for a similar woman for companionship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 117916 or send a text to 80360

PASSION FLOWER youthful, friendly Oxford chap, 59, 5'9", dark hair, enjoys cinema, bowling, active days out and socialising, seeking a loving, happy and loyal woman, to build a lasting relationship with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 101122 or send a text to 80360

CARING NATURE Dependable, informed and responsible Witney man, 59, 6'3", looking for a helpful, decent woman, to share a brighter future together. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 111595

PERFECT TOGETHER Hard-working Oxfordshire male, 60, 6ft, widower, grey hair, smart, likes most things in life, now searching for an equally honest and genuine woman, to share love, life and true happiness. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142767 or send a text to 80360

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DECISION IS YOURS Honest, easygoing Yorkshire man living in Banbury, 60, 5'6", slim build, self-employed, likes gardening, cooking, cinema, travel, countryside, seeks genuine lady, to share life with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140930 or send a text to 80360

LONG LASTING HAPPINESS Fairly fit Banbury man, 61, 5'11", fair-hair, blue-eyes, works as electrician, looking for a nice lady around the same age, for friendship possibly leading to more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 122384

SO GOOD TOGETHER Genuine, easygoing, happy Abingdon male, 62, own home/car, enjoys dancing, days out and walking the dog, searching for a genuine lady, with an attractive and happy nature. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 466085

LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH Friendly, warm-hearted Abingdon male, 51, good sense of humour, would like to meet a caring, well-matured girl, to enjoy good times together. Is you're looking for true love then get in touch. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 15894

GET TO THE GOOD TIMES Separated, laid-back Bicester guy, 51, 5'10", brown hair/blue eyes, decent build, self-employed, looking for an attractive woman. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 136282 or send a text to 80360

ACCEPTANCE EACH OTHER Easygoing Witney male, 51, own car, works full-time, likes most sports, would like to meet an outgoing female, for good times leading to more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 135164 or send a text to 80360

GOOD NATURED Upbeat Bicester male, 52, 5'10", brown hair, medium build, looking for an attractive, likeable lady, for friendship and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140492 or send a text to 80360

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A FRIEND INDEED Semi-retired Oxford male, 67, 6', slim-build, likes playing bowls, home life, seeking an easygoing female, for good times and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 137812 or send a text to 80360

JUST AN ORDINARY GUY Kind-hearted, considerate and loving Didcot man, 67, would like a date with an old-fashioned, intuitive lady, for friendship and maybe more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 456285

OPEN YOUR HEART Cuddly, slim Banbury male, 70, 5'6", GSOH, likes sport, walks, animals and cosy times, searching for a decent lady, to settle down with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 140901 or send a text to 80360

SEE FOR YOURSELF Youthful, faithful, liberal and sympathetic Middlesbrough man, 72, looking for a sweet, sensitive woman, for good times and great company. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 141502 or send a text to 80360

HOPE THIS WORKS Cuddly Swindon lady, 47, easygoing and fun to be with, looking for friendship leading to more with a nice, friendly, bubbly woman. Where are you? Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 851817

LUCKY CHARM Serious, lovable and imaginative Malmesbury lady, 54, simply searching for an independent, free-thinking girl, for a special and lasting relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142183 or send a text to 80360

IT'S YOUR MOVE Sunny, pensive and trustworthy Swindon girl, 58, 5'4", average build, loves socialising and the outdoors, now looking to find an adaptable, genuine woman, to build a loving relationship with. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142183 or send a text to 80360

GET IN THE FRAME Warm, honest, independent Oxfordshire woman, 60, with many active interests in life, now searching for a nice, honest woman, to share the fun things in life, and a lasting relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 142484

ON THE MENU Attractive Didcot male, 43, 5'10", blond-hair, stocky-build, seeks mature, active gent, 60+, for red wine, fun and friendship, othac would be nice. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 138566 or send a text to 80360

MADE TO MATCH? Genuine, loving, honest guy, 52, good sense of humour, looking for the same in my soul mate. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 128318

KING OF MY HEART Lively, confident Oxford male, 54, would like to meet a mature, active male, for good times and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 135675

MAKE A CONNECTION Interesting, friendly Oxford male, 64, varied interests, loves walks, reading, travel and more, seeks sensitive male, similar age, for a loving relationship. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 857624

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW... Easygoing, friendly Didcot male, 66, enjoys walks, theatre, cosy times in, socialising, seeks a friendly, active chap, for company and more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 131800

FROM THIS MOMENT Friendly, easygoing, fit Witney chap, 68, would like to meet an affectionate male, for company, companionship and hopefully more. Call 0905 005 2359 and enter box number 143904 or send a text to 80360

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Staking a claim with a classic vampire story

BYZANTIUM (15, 118 mins)
Horror/Drama/Romance. Gemma Arterton, Saoirse Ronan, Caleb Landry Jones, Daniel Mays, Tom Hollander, Sam Riley, Jonny Lee Miller. Director: Neil Jordan.

Long before Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart sank their pearly whites into *The Twilight Saga*, British director Neil Jordan was entertaining A-list bloodsuckers on the big screen.

Interview With *The Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* paired Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt as fanged fiends whose fortunes entwined in rivers of crimson on the streets of New Orleans.

Almost 20 years later, Jordan plants a stake back in the genre with *Byzantium*, an intelligent and moody thriller adapted by Moira Buffini from her own stage play, which largely avoids the campy conventions we have come to expect from the creatures of the night.

And luminous young actress Saoirse Ronan holds our attention with her tortured and mournful glances that conjure memories of Tomas Alfredson's coming-of-age story *Let The Right One*.

Ballsy single mother Clara Webb (Gemma Arterton) arrives in a run-down seaside resort with her daughter, Eleanor (Saoirse Ronan), in tow.

In order to make ends meet, Clara sells her body to residents

and holidaymakers, earning just enough to keep the pair off the streets.

Every now and then, she sinks her teeth into an unsuspecting punter and we discover, in flashback, that Clara is in fact a vampire who was much abused in the 19th century by a libidinous captain (Jonny Lee Miller) and has wrought revenge on mankind ever since.

Eleanor is her equally bloodthirsty ward, who refuses to abide by the ancient code.

The vampires hit the jackpot when they meet a lonely misfit (Daniel Mays), who lives in the decrepit Byzantium guest house, which would make a perfect base of operations for Clara's illicit operations.

So, while the older bloodsucker recruits local girls from the streets, Eleanor drifts around the resort, catching the eye of a young waiter, Frank (Caleb Landry Jones), who is waging a long, protracted battle with leukaemia.

When Darvell (Sam Riley), a Machiavellian face from Clara's past, turns up at the guest house, battle lines are drawn.

Byzantium is a slow burn, with occasional explosions of graphic violence when Clara or Eleanor sate their bloodlust.

The fractured chronology hampers dramatic momentum but Jordan navigates a clear path between past and present, drawing



Saoirse Ronan, as Eleanor Webb, in a scene from *Byzantium*

Picture: PA Photo/
Studio Canal

us into his heroines' unusual predicament.

Ronan is spellbinding, conveying most of her emotions through her eyes, while Arterton takes the flashier, brassier role as vengeful protector.

Pace quickens in the blazing final act as fates collide on the coast and everything – except for two centuries of sin – is washed away.

CakeWhat's on

Theatre

The Mill Arts Centre, Spiceball Park, Banbury:

Jun 6, *Questioning Aslan*, by Nigel Forde, presented by Searchlight Theatre Company. This work of fiction, inspired by the life of C.S. Lewis, asks questions and finds answers that will challenge and inspire. £12. 7.30pm.

Jun 7, *The Ups and Downs Of Life As A Comic Book Creator*. Comic book scriptwriter, illustrator and editor Tim Quinn takes you on a highly nostalgic trip down memory lane to meet some of the great and not-so great comic characters of the last 150 years. The audience is invited to attend wearing capes and masks. £10. 7.30pm.

Jun 8, *Tango - A History of Passion*. A kaleidoscope of visual images, live music and dance, bringing to life the history of Tango. 7.30pm. £18 (adv £15). Cabaret seating.

Box office: 01295 279002.

The Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton:

Jun 6, *An Instinct For Kindness*. Chris Lerner's solo performance

relating the story of accompanying his chronically ill ex-wife to Dignitas in Switzerland. £14, conc £12. 7.45pm. £14, concession £12.

Jun 7, *Kit and McConnel*. Kit Hesketh-Harvey (Kit and the Widow) and pianist James McConnel perform their irreverent cabaret songs. An evening of comedy and silliness. £15, concession £13. 7.45pm. Box office: 01608 642350

Music

THURSDAY – St Leonard's Church, Church Street, Chipping Norton: Bledington Music Festival.

Three evenings of concerts in a beautiful Cotswold church. The Cann Twins, piano duo, playing music by Tchaikovsky, Gershwin, Bizet and others. They will be joined in two songs by the choir of Bledington School. Pavao String Quartet will play Dvořák's celebrated *American Quartet* as well as Britten's *Simple Symphony*, Phantasia Quartet by Albert Sammons and well-known tunes from the Great American Songbook. Thomas Trotter, City of Birmingham Organist and Festival

President with Celia Craig, Oboe will play Marcello's *Oboe Concerto*, as well as works for solo organ and solo oboe. Each concert £18 to include canapés. 7.30pm. 01608 658669.

FRIDAY – The Musketeer Pub, Ruscombe Avenue, Banbury: The Stand in Stones – an evening of classic Stones. 9pm. Free admission. 01295 265081.

Events

SATURDAY

Craft and Gift Fair: Town Hall, Market Place, Chipping Norton. Featuring local artisans and businesses. Tea-rooms available. Stalls include jewellery, art, textiles, photography, bears, and more. From 10am. Free. 07976715908.

SUNDAY

Banbury and District Show: Spiceball Park, Banbury. Two fields of fun and entertainment, including Up 'n' Over dog show. Fairground rides, inflatables, farmyard animals, ferret racing, archery, quad bikes, beer marquee, stalls. Free admission. 10.30am-4.30pm. 01295 250340.

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Banbury bounce back

Skipper Ryan plays a key role

OXFORDSHIRE skipper Luke Ryan played a key role as Banbury bounced back to winning with a 16-run victory over Potters Bar in Division 1 at White Post Road.

He made an unbeaten 35 off 37 balls as Banbury battled to 178-9 off 50 overs, and then took 3-17 off ten tight overs of left-arm spin to help bowl Potters Bar out for 162.

After being put in to bat on a sporting wicket, Banbury quickly lost openers Lloyd Sabin and Ian Tew to lbw decisions as Scott Sikander and George Scott produced lively opening spells.

Craig Haupt steadied the ship though with 52 off 96 balls, including four fours and a six, before he was caught on the

long on boundary by Jemel Warrican off Ben Taylor.

Potters Bar were reduced to ten men for the last 20 overs after Dan Pascoe suffered a cut eyebrow – which required stitches in Horton General Hospital – after being hit as he dived to his left to field a Richard West drive off his own bowling.

Ryan took advantage of the gaps in the field, and was joined by captain Jimmy Phillips in what was to be a crucial unbroken last-wicket stand of 26.

Ollie Wright struck a couple of early blows in the Potters Bar innings by bowling openers David Breeze and Scott.

But Sikander (53) and Warrican (33) rebuilt the innings to take Potters Bar to 101-4.

Ryan trapped the dangerous Sikander lbw and won a similar decision against skipper Chris Swainland, who was clearly unimpressed by the verdict, during his accurate spell.

South African import Brady Barends returned to the attack to take two wickets, including Pascoe, after his hospital visit, before West wrapped up the innings with the last two wickets.



Banbury batsman Richard West dives to make his ground as Potters Bar wicket-keeper Chris Swainland whips the balls off

SCORECARD

| BANBURY | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| L Sabin lbw Sikandar | 2 |
| I Tew lbw Scott | 5 |
| C Haupt c Warrican b Taylor | 52 |
| N Hawkes b Sikandar | 10 |
| R West lbw Hodge | 16 |
| J Cater c Swainland b Scott | 16 |
| L Ryan not out | 35 |
| A Blanchard run out | 3 |
| B Barends b Scott | 3 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| O Wright st Swainland b Warrican | 3 |
| J Phillips not out | 10 |
| Extras | 6 |
| Total (9 wks, 50 ovs) | 178 |
| Fall: 1-12, 2-18, 3-38, 4-95, 5-99, 6-130, 7-138, 8-147, 9-152. | |
| Bowling: Sikandar 10-4-23-2, Scott 10-0-46-3, Warrican 10-2-20-1, Pascoe 7-0-25-0, Taylor 8-0-39-1, Hodge 5-0-22-1. | |

| POTTERS BAR | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| D Breeze b Wright | 7 |
| G Scott b Wright | 6 |
| T Sikandar lbw Ryan | 53 |
| P Sodbodjor c Phillips b Ryan | 7 |
| J Warrican run out | 33 |
| C Swainland lbw Ryan | 1 |
| T Coughlan lbw Barends | 1 |
| D Pascoe c Blanchard b Barends | 10 |
| B Taylor not out | 13 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| D Pett c Cater b West | 11 |
| G Hodge c Hawkes b West | 0 |
| Extras | 20 |
| Total (all out, 49 ovs) | 162 |
| Fall: 1-10, 2-24, 3-48, 4-101, 5-107, 6-109, 7-124, 8-139, 9-162. | |
| Bowling: Barends 10-0-28-2, Wright 6-0-23-2, Blanchard 10-0-25-0, Ryan 10-2-17-3, Phillips 5-0-14-0, West 8-0-41-2. | |
| ● Banbury 25pts, Potters Bar 6 | |

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ARIES

Mar 21-Apr 19

Work proves stressful but, rather than coping all on your own, have you not thought about asking others to help you? To try to manage everything on your own is only proving to those with power that you are no longer a team player. Try to pay more attention to the way you look and dress. First impressions count for everything this weekend. Phone me now to hear the full story.

0906 585 4360

LIBRA

Sep 23-Oct 22

When you strive for your goals, do it for yourself Libra, not just to make others happy. Tell yourself you can be the best you can be. I believe in you and so should you. Emails or the written word can confirm whether or not a trip of some sort will be going ahead in the next few weeks. That bad habit is back and should be dropped again now. Call now for power, strength and clarity.

0906 585 4366

TAURUS

Apr 20-May 20

The attitudes of a lifetime are not easy to change overnight, that much we've learnt, haven't we Taurus? However, if you choose to wear your new outlook every day this week, it will soon become like a second skin. News of a birth or pregnancy has some sort of personal effect on your own life. Give me a call to hear why this is a good week to deal with delicate property matters.

0906 585 4361

SCORPIO

Oct 23-Nov 21

Pick yourself up, dust yourself off and focus on your dreams. Those who say you can't achieve them don't really know you at all. Trusting in your feelings this week can cement a new relationship which will help you to enjoy your day to day living again. Don't give a reaction to jealous words this weekend. Ring me now to hear about the future you're destined for.

0906 585 4367

GEMINI

May 21-Jun 20

There are many voices inside your head right now. The positive ones will tell you that you are clever and special and that you can succeed and those, right there, are the only ones worth listening to. An old relationship or friendship comes back into your life. How long for, depends on your initial reaction. Come now to hear why this is a time to plan trips away for later this year.

0906 585 4362

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22-Dec 21

Emotions run high and you may find it hard to know who your true friends are and who you can really trust. A new interest you develop around now could cost you more than you can afford. Don't be too embarrassed to look at the cheaper options while you're learning. A new flirtation comes with a price to pay, so think carefully. Ring now to hear who's thinking of house moves.

0906 585 4368

CANCER

Jun 21-Jul 22

Trouble seems to have found you last week which means that this week you're left with a lot of clearing up to do. Your element of water is pushing you to wallow in a problem you should have moved on from by now. Lift yourself up Cancer, there's a life out there waiting to be lived if you'd focus. Ring now so I can put you back on the path to success and happiness again.

0906 585 4363

CAPRICORN

Dec 22-Jan 19

Harmony comes back into your inner circle so you are no longer left fretting and worrying about a close one who was getting out of control. No relationships come without some sort of a struggle but you're starting to work out who is an asset and who holds you back, which could see the departure of someone you've known for a very long time this week. Ring me for the finer details.

0906 585 4369

LEO

Jul 23-Aug 22

Your spirits are lifted this week by the amount of support and love you're shown by close ones. You may feel like cancelling busy arrangements others have made on your behalf, but try to make the effort as there are people who the stars want you to meet. Wednesday's revelations leave you with a major decision to make. Ring now to use the wisdom of Saturn.

0906 585 4364

AQUARIUS

Jan 20-Feb 18

The choices you make this week will shape your future. Make them carefully so you can reap the rewards. I don't want to see any more guessing games or leaving things to others. You've reached a serious turning point in your life now. Ensuring you've got the right passengers on your journey is possible with time to hearts had before Friday. Ring now, I have so much more to tell you.

0906 585 4370

VIRGO

Aug 23-Sep 22

You've got to come to the realisation that you have to get out of the relationships which bring you down and don't give anything back. Someone has been using you and the only person who can stop them is you. Lift yourself up Virgo, there's a life out there waiting to be lived if you'd focus. Ring now so I can put you back on the path to success and happiness again.

0906 585 4365

PISCES

Feb 19-Mar 20

You're starting to make sense of the events which transpired at the beginning of the year, and in the process you've learnt that you should not have placed your trust in a certain person. Just bear in mind that you don't need to place your voice to part ways with them. Keeping manners to the fore will show you you're back in control. Call now for an exciting prediction about home affairs.

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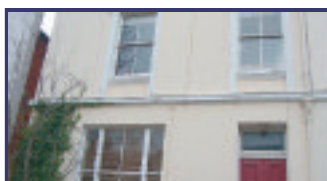
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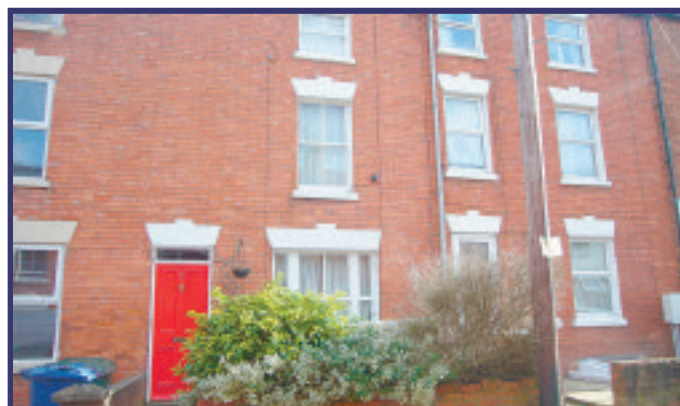
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Wheels and deals

■ A NEW Vauxhall Cascada, from Bridge Motors, of Banbury, will lead the 'Carnival of Colour' procession at the Brackley Carnival on Saturday. The convertible will light the way for a sea of floats, with electrifying costumes following behind, at the procession which starts at the old sawmill at 11am and finishes at Magdalen College School.

■ RENAULT has announced a new limited edition dubbed the Mégane Renaultsport Red Bull Racing RB8, designed to tie in the French manufacturer's hot hatch with the Renault-powered F1 World Champions. Finished in Twilight Blue, the race team's famous colours, there are Red Bull Racing graphics at the rear and the sides. Platinum Grey details include the F1 blade, door handles, door mirror housing and rear lip. The limited edition Mégane Renaultsport Red Bull Racing RB8 will be available until September 30. UK pricing will be made public closer to the official launch.

By Our Reporter

IMPRESSIVE performance numbers and an attractive price are two important attributes of SEAT's latest Ibiza hot hatch.

The telltale sign is the Spanish car maker's use of its trademark Cupra branding, something fans of SEAT's GTI-baiting cars recognise as heralding the arrival of the firm's flagship hot supermini.

Value for money is one thing but looks can make or break a car.

SEAT has cleverly chosen to give the Ibiza a relatively low-key Cupra makeover, with the regular car's already distinctive sharp lines and squat stance doing most of the work.

Plus the Cupra's low ride height, bespoke bumpers, black mirror housings, central tailpipe and LED running lights give you a classy-looking hatch that's neither brash nor a wallflower.

SEAT might be keen to promote its Spanish roots but the upside of being part of the mighty Volkswagen Group is the ability to make full use of its extensive parts inventory.

Every so often you'll find a few gems in the parts bin, and helping the Ibiza Cupra to achieve its segment-busting performance figures is the Volkswagen Group's hi-tech 180 horsepower, 1.4-litre turbo and supercharged petrol engine.

The engine's trick is to combine the measured low-down response of the supercharger with the turbo's more immediate response at the upper end of the performance scale.

Owners of Skoda's second-generation Fabia vRS hot hatch will be familiar with this experience given that the car shares the same engine with the Ibiza.

As such, the Ibiza's 184lb ft torque figure is accessible from a lowly 2,000rpm. And it's a contributing factor to the car's brisk 6.9 second 0-62mph sprint time.

Reinforcing the benefits of cross-company parts sharing, the Ibiza also boasts the same seven-speed DSG gearbox as the Fabia.

The upshot is a transmission adept at responding swiftly to driver inputs. Left alone, it will quickly and smoothly shift up to a high ratio in a bid to maximise fuel economy and refinement.



QUICK SHIFT: The Cupra uses the same seven-speed DSG gearbox as Skoda's Fabia vRS

However, when you want to press on, downshifts are quick and taking manual control via the pair of paddles mounted behind the steering wheel allows you to better match your speed to a gear of your choosing.

Considerable effort has been made by SEAT's engineers to tune the Ibiza Cupra for a variety of road conditions, and it's clear that the car's noticeably pliant ride is a welcome step forward over the old model.

Fun, engaging and refined in equal measure, SEAT's generosity with a long list of standard equipment is the icing on the cake.

Auto facts

Model: SEAT Ibiza Cupra
Price: From £18,570 on the road
Insurance group: 27 (1-50)
Fuel consumption (Combined): 47.9mpg
Top speed: 142mph
Length: 405.5cm/159.6in
Width: 169.3cm/66.6in
Luggage capacity: 8.4 cu ft
Fuel capacity: 45 litres/ 9.9 gallons
CO₂ emissions: 139g/km
Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles

Youngdrivers

'Black box' scheme could cut insurance bill

INSURANCE premiums may have witnessed a slight respite recently with the introduction of legislation to cut down on so-called 'ambulance chasers', but for young people the first year's premium is still a crippling burden.

Parents often help with the cost, but insurance broker R K Harrison has joined forces with the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) to try to reduce the burden on young drivers.

It works like this: a parent takes out a 'family' insurance portfolio covering a number of

different policies including cover for their child's car – and the young driver can build up their own no-claims discount.

A 'black box' monitoring system is installed into the car to measure speed, acceleration and braking, plus a GPS location logger to correlate driving inputs to road types. Then, within a month of the policy's start, the youngster must take a specific half-day course with an IAM instructor, who goes through aspects of staying safe behind the wheel. There are theory elements and practical on-road sections too.

Katie Small, director of R K

Harrison, said: "Telematics isn't a new idea into the market, but unlike any other solution that just monitors the driving, we are giving young drivers the tools to have the experience that they wouldn't have by only taking normal driving lessons and a driving test."

Every month, a report on the young driver's 'safety performance' is sent to them and their parents. Ms Small said the family portfolio should work out between 10% and 30% cheaper than an equivalent product outside of this scheme.

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MOTORS

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01865 245418 or 07833 160856

£750 T

Fiat

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MAZDA MX5

1.8, W reg, taxed and 10 months MOT, silver black soft top and hard top, 2000, 51,100 miles, manual, unleaded, 1840 cc, FSH. Many extras, must be seen.

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March 1997, Charcoal Grey, MOT March '14, 5 Speed Manual Diesel, Alarm, Alloys, Electric Sunroof, Economical 104800 miles

07817151526

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Seat

SEAT IBIZA 85 STYLANCE

1.4 16v, Hatchback, 3door, 2008, Blue, Petrol, MOT Nov '13, FSH, Airbag, ABS, CD, Climate control, e/m, e/w, PAS, rc/l, new battery and plugs

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SAAB 9 5 2.3T

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CPI GTR 50



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BMW 318i



BMW 318 i Black 3 owners last one for 4 years some service history no expense spared drives well looks smart 125500 miles

07971244797

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Citroen

CITROEN ZX

1.4 Pzazz Ltd Edn Hatchback 5d, 1993, White, Petrol, Manual, Tax and Mot, excellent condition, very reliable

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01865764854

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